

# Japan's Private Development Assistance in Southeast Asia: Case Studies from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar

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## Introduction

In recent years the field of international development assistance has changed dramatically. While the number of mainstream official development assistance donors, represented by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, has increased, “new” donors like China and Brazil have emerged. In addition, conceptions of the nonprofit sector have broadened, and with that trend understandings of “NGO assistance” have changed. Finally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and migrant remittances are now being considered as previously underestimated sources of development finance. The latter two trends are seen by some scholars and practitioners as constituting a new kind of “private development assistance.”

The research presented here applies the recently-developed concept of private development assistance to overseas private nonprofit activity by nongovernmental and corporate organizations in Japan. The article reviews the concept of private development assistance, then focuses on the charitable activities of three kinds of private organization: registered nonprofit organizations, public interest corporations, and corporations undertaking corporate social responsibility activity overseas. The article then focuses on projects carried out by these three kinds of organization in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar as a first step toward assessing whether they have a developmental focus and impact. Conclusions and limitations of the project are discussed.

## Literature review

The literature on overseas voluntary, philanthropic activity in Japan has tended to follow one of the following three research fields. One focuses on the nonprofit/nongovernmental sector and either examines its domestic institutional dimension or the activities of nongovernmental organizations overseas. Representative examples include Yamamoto (1998) and Saotome (1997). A second

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examines the development and characteristics of civil society in Japan, including a range of associations beyond narrow legal definitions of “nonprofit organization” (Pekkanen 2006; Haddad 2012; Schwartz and Pharr 2003). A third focuses on philanthropy, giving, and corporate social responsibility. The term philanthropy is used broadly in the Japanese context, conflated with corporate charity (Deguchi 1993) and encompassing a wide array of social organizations (Okuyama and Yamauchi 2015; Potter 2015; Tucker 1998).

Within these interrelated research areas research on overseas assistance has tended to focus on nongovernmental organizations (Riemann 2010; Saotome 1997; Hirata 2002). In fact, the term “nongovernmental organization” (NGO) is identified closely with overseas assistance; “nonprofit organizations” (NPOs) are understood to operate domestically.

Although the term “private development assistance” is often heard and used nowadays by researchers, its definition and concept are still unclarified. Comparing research by Kaori Kuroda (2011), Carol Adelman (2003), Homi Kharas (2007), and Heidi Metcalf Little (2010) about PDA enables us to grasp what PDA refers to and what kind of activity, groups, and notions are included.

First, how do they define private development assistance? Kuroda states that PDA stands for the opposite of official development assistance (ODA) and defines it as “support for developing countries by private social contribution activity” (p28). A similar but more interesting and concrete definition is given by Little: “PDA is a cross-border transfers of cash, grants, loans, in-kind contributions, or volunteer time to individuals, NGOs, or government” (p. 2). While Kuroda sees PDA as a private sector activity Little includes government in it. Furthermore, Adelman does not even use the term PDA but “private donations” instead. Similarly, Kharas refers to “private aid sector” or “private organization.” There is no great difference among the terms used, yet it is notable that the term PDA has neither a proper definition nor common usage.

Second, what kinds of private activity does each author include as a part of PDA? According to Kuroda, international NGOs, foundations, private philanthropists, and corporations which do not invest directly, universities, religious organizations, volunteering, and remittances play a role in PDA. Similarly, Adelman considers foundations, corporations, universities, religious groups, and remittances as a part of PDA. On the other hand, Kharas thinks that PDA includes only international NGOs, foundations, private philanthropist, and religious groups. Moreover, surprisingly, Little states that only private philanthropists, remittances, and private investment are included in PDA. In short, all four apprehend PDA differently.

Private development assistance in this research is understood to consist of assistance, financial or otherwise, provided by public interest corporations, nonprofit organizations, and the corporate social responsibility activities of private firms. This is consistent with the CSO Network's (2012) understanding of the mainstream of Japanese private development assistance. Migrant remittances and private investment are not considered.

## Methodology

The research focused on the charitable activities of three kinds of private organization: registered nonprofit organizations (NPOs), public interest corporations (*koueki houjin*), and corporations undertaking corporate social responsibility activity overseas. The authors then focused on projects carried out by these three kinds of organization in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar.

Separate datasets were constructed for *koueki houjin* and NPOs using the Cabinet Agency's (Naikakufu 2017) current list of NPOs with special tax status and past and current JANIC directories (1994, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2017) of international cooperation NGOs. There is a fair amount of overlap between the two directories, so care was taken not to double-count the 2017 data during the first stages of dataset creation. Use of the JANIC directories tends to overemphasize the international character of NPOs, somewhat less so for the *koueki houjin* which are also found in that directory. A separate dataset for international corporate social responsibility was constructed from the Keidanren 1% Club database and related materials. This pool of nonprofit and CSR organizations formed the data set used in the rest of the analysis.

The datasets were then used to identify nonprofit associations and corporations reporting CSR activity in three countries in Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Southeast Asia was selected because it is a region with substantial Japanese nonprofit and corporate activity. It has also experienced substantial economic development and a transition to democratic political status. Cambodia and Myanmar were chosen because they are two of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. Both are rated not free by Freedom House, but Myanmar since 2011 has begun a limited process of political reform. This has led to renewed Japanese ODA to Myanmar since then, and it is possible that

Table 1: Economic Development Indicators for Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar

|                | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|----------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| GDP per capita | \$3700   | \$11700   | \$5800  |
| World Rank     | 180      | 129       | 164     |
| HDI Score      | 0.563    | 0.689     | 0.556   |
| HDI Rank       | 143      | 113       | 145     |

Source: CIA World Factbook; Human Development Report, 2016

Table 2: Political Freedom in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar

|           | Freedom status | PR | CL | Freedom Rating |
|-----------|----------------|----|----|----------------|
| Cambodia  | Not Free       | 6  | 5  | 5.5            |
| Indonesia | Partly Free    | 2  | 4  | 3.0            |
| Myanmar   | Partly Free    | 5  | 5  | 5.0            |

Source: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2017

it might have had a similar effect on Japanese NGO activity. Indonesia was chosen for its higher level of economic development (see tables 1 and 2).

The data was used to investigate private development assistance activity in each country by number of nonprofits or CSR projects and type of activity. In the case of *koueki houjin* and NPOs only the JANIC directory includes information on activity type and which countries a nonprofit reports working in. None of the directories reports data on where projects are carried out within a country. The search for data was necessarily limited to nonprofits listed in the directory, supplemented by searches of organizations' websites.

Comparison of datasets was a basic methodological problem that confronted the research team. *Koueki houjin* and NPOs are legal organizational types while CSR is a type of activity. Moreover, the various directories present information about type of activity differently. Therefore, strict parallel comparison of CSR activity with nonprofit and foundation activity should be avoided. The results derived from the study should rather be read in light of similarities, differences, and complementarity of assistance among the three.

## Results and discussion

The results are presented in Tables 3 to 10.3.

Table 3 shows the number of each type of organization that was listed either in the Cabinet Agency's list of nonprofit organizations with special tax status or the JANIC Directory (in the case of *koueki houjin* and NPOs) or the Keidanren 1% Club for corporations. Figures are as of 2017. Approximately one in six *koueki houjin* and 1% Club members report overseas activity, while nearly one in three NPOs do. As noted above, use of the JANIC directory tends to overemphasize the international character of NPOs, as can be seen from the percentages reported on the right of the table, somewhat less so for the *koueki houjin* which are also found in that directory. Caution should be exercised when analyzing this data, as reporting an "international" focus does not necessarily mean that the association conducts operations abroad (Potter and Nanzan University International NPO Research Team 2012). Overall, the results found here are consistent with the prior literature cited in the methodology section.

Table 4 shows data on associations currently reporting activity in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar. *Koueki houjin* and NPO numbers are fairly consistent across the three countries. But note

Table 3: Associations with an international focus by type

| Association type     | Total number | Overseas    |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Koueki houjin</i> | 956          | 162 (16.9%) |
| NPOs                 | 997          | 321 (32.1%) |
| Keidanren 1%         | 227          | 36 (15.8%)  |

Sources: JANIC 2017; Naikakufu 2017; Keidanren 2017

Table 4: Associations working in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar by type

| Type/country         | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| <i>Koueki houjin</i> | 24       | 19        | 22      |
| NPOs                 | 45       | 37        | 39      |
| Keidanren 1%         | 6        | 20        | 10      |

Sources: JANIC 2017, Naikakufu 2017, Keidanren 2017

that Indonesia is favored by Keidanren 1% Club members. This may be due to the fact that there are more Japanese corporations operating there than in Cambodia and Myanmar.

### Distribution of associations by country

The research team then attempted to investigate *koueki houjin*, NPO, and CSR activity in each country. JANIC published periodic directories from 1994 to 2008, so the team was able to construct partial snapshots of member organizations' presence and activity in each country. JANIC data is based on survey responses, so the findings presented below should be treated as suggestive rather than conclusive. Moreover, the authors were unable to identify a similar historical data source for Keidanren 1% Club members before 2004. NPOs became a separate type of legal corporation only in 2000, so chronological data for them is presented from that year.

Table 3 reports *koueki houjin* identified in the JANIC directories from 1994 to 2008 and working in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar in the years 1994–2008. To this was added data from the current (2017) JANIC online directory. The table shows that from year 1994 to 2004, the number of *koueki houjin* reporting activity in Cambodia and Indonesia fell. Nevertheless, from 2004 to 2008, the number of *koueki houjin* providing assistance in those countries increased, then have subsided since.

Table 6 shows the rate of Keidanren 1% Club companies reporting CSR projects in the three countries in selected years from 2004 to 2107. Data before 2004 was found to be unreliable. All show fluctuations with a general trend toward diminution. The reason that CSR for Indonesia is more abundant than Myanmar and Cambodia is that Indonesia and Japan have deep historical ties. Japan

Table 5: *Koueki Houjin* in three countries, 1994–2017

|      | Indonesia | Myanmar | Cambodia |
|------|-----------|---------|----------|
| 1994 | 15        | 4       | 24       |
| 2000 | 8         | 4       | 9        |
| 2004 | 6         | 6       | 10       |
| 2008 | 26        | 23      | 23       |
| 2017 | 13        | 12      | 16       |

Source: compiled by the authors from JANIC directories, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2017.

Table 6: Japanese Corporate Social Responsibility Projects by Country, 2004–2017

| Year/Country | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|--------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| 2004         | 25       | 71        | 11      |
| 2008         | 14       | 15        | 12      |
| 2012         | 10       | 27        | 11      |
| 2017         | 6        | 20        | 10      |

Source: compiled by the authors from Keidanren 1% Club data, 2004–2017

Table 7: NPOs in Three Countries, 2000–2017

|      | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|------|----------|-----------|---------|
| 2000 | 38       | 22        | 12      |
| 2004 | 42       | 22        | 22      |
| 2008 | 36       | 21        | 13      |
| 2017 | 32       | 26        | 29      |

Source: JANIC, selected years

has provided more ODA to Indonesia than the other two countries, and Japanese investment there is substantially larger.

Table 7 shows the number of NPOs registered in the JANIC directories that reported working in Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2017. NPOs working in Cambodia peaked in 2004, however after that the number has been decreasing. Indonesia also did not show any change in numbers. In Myanmar, the number of NGOs working increased from 2000 to 2004, but suddenly decreased in 2008. There are two possible reasons behind this. First, in 2007, one Japanese died in an anti-government demonstration in Myanmar. In 2008, a new constitution made it difficult for foreigners to enter Myanmar. However, in 2011, the military government agreed to share power with civilian organizations, and that is why there are more NGOs working in 2017.

Compared to the CSR data presented in Table 6 NGO projects focus slightly more on Cambodia in this survey, suggesting that local development needs weigh more in NGO calculations of where to carry out projects.

### Sectoral activity by country by type of private development assistance

The authors then compiled data on sectoral activity in each country. Tables 8–10.3 present the results of the research. Due to gaps in its database Keidanren 1% Club data from 2004–2017 is aggregated.

Tables 8 to 10.3 reveal three patterns of assistance. First, there is a broad range of activity, with each country receiving a somewhat different mix of assistance. Second, in all three countries

Table 8: *Koueki Houjin* Activity by type in three countries (2017)

| Field/Country              | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Children                   | 3        | 2         | 2       |
| Medicine and health        | 5        | 6         | 8       |
| Emergency assistance       | 5        | 3         | 3       |
| Education                  | 23       | 14        | 13      |
| Environment                | 4        | 6         | 2       |
| Social development         | 3        | 2         | 1       |
| Material assistance        | 6        | 0         | 2       |
| Human resource development | 9        | 1         | 3       |
| Human rights               | 0        | 1         | 1       |
| Peace building, peace      | 1        | 0         | 1       |

Source: JANIC, Nakakufu, compiled by the authors

Table 9: NGO Activity by type across three countries (2017)

| Field/Country                           | Cambodia | Indonesia | Myanmar |
|---|----------|-----------|---------|
| Education                               | 31       | 24        | 20      |
| Medicine and health                     | 18       | 4         | 10      |
| Emergency assistance                    | 16       | 26        | 30      |
| Financial support                       | 9        | 18        | 16      |
| Information provision                   | 3        | 11        | 8       |
| Field research                          | 4        | 18        | 13      |
| Human rights                            | 6        | 2         | 2       |
| Peace building, peace                   | 10       | 0         | 2       |
| Urban development                       | 2        | 0         | 2       |
| Advocacy                                | 1        | 3         | 3       |
| Publicity activities                    | 0        | 0         | 1       |
| Refugees                                | 0        | 2         | 2       |
| NGO related activity                    | 0        | 5         | 3       |
| Environmental education, global warming | 0        | 1         | 1       |
| Fair trade                              | 0        | 0         | 1       |
| Community trade                         | 0        | 0         | 1       |
| Children                                | 0        | 0         | 3       |
| Hands-on activities                     | 0        | 0         | 1       |
| Total                                   | 100      | 114       | 119     |

Source: JANIC (2017), compiled by the authors

Table 10.1: Keidanren 1% Club assistance in Cambodia by sector, 2004–2017

| Field/Country              | 2004 | 2008 | 2012 | 2017 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Human resource development | 0    | 1    | 2    | 3    |
| Education                  | 9    | 6    | 4    | 4    |
| Infrastructure development | 5    | 2    | 1    | 0    |
| Agriculture assistance     | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Material assistance        | 1    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| Environment protection     | 1    | 2    | 2    | 1    |
| NPO assistance             | 1    | 1    | 2    | 0    |
| Disaster assistance        | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Culture and arts           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Medicine and health        | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    |
| Donations                  | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Other                      | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

Table 10.2: Keidanren 1% Club assistance in Indonesia by sector, 2004–2017

| Field/Country              | 2004 | 2008 | 2012 | 2017 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Human resource development | 2    | 1    | 5    | 1    |
| Education                  | 9    | 7    | 10   | 8    |
| Infrastructure development | 4    | 4    | 3    | 5    |
| Agriculture assistance     | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| Material assistance        | 3    | 1    | 1    | 2    |
| Environment protection     | 5    | 10   | 11   | 6    |
| NPO assistance             | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| Disaster assistance        | 49   | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| Culture and arts           | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Medicine and health        | 1    | 4    | 3    | 2    |
| Donations                  | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Other                      | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    |

education-related assistance, including formal education, vocational assistance, and informal education, is a common thread across all three types of association. Third, one finds many NGO and *koueki houjin* activities related to education, medical services, and social development. This is consistent with the sectoral profile of Japanese NGO activities in general (JICA 2008, 8). Educational activities by NGOs include support for formal education, vocational training, and human resource education. Formal education activities in Cambodia and Indonesia focus on teacher training, while education activities in Myanmar consists mainly of building schools. *Koueki houjin* educational support, on the other hand, includes provision of scholarships and foreign student sponsorship as well



Table 10.3: Keidanren 1% Club assistance in Myanmar by sector, 2004–2017

| Field/Country              | 2004 | 2008 | 2012 | 2017 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Human resource development | 0    | 0    | 2    | 2    |
| Education                  | 8    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| Infrastructure development | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| Agriculture assistance     | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| Material assistance        | 1    | 2    | 3    | 3    |
| Environment protection     | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    |
| NPO assistance             | 1    | 1    | 2    | 0    |
| Disaster assistance        | 0    | 8    | 0    | 0    |
| Culture and arts           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Medicine and health        | 0    | 1    | 3    | 2    |
| Donations                  | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Other                      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

as support for school construction and repair, dispatch of teachers, scholarships, and job training. CSR also supports education (especially school construction and materials provision), with human resource development, interestingly, being a less popular area of assistance.

The data in tables 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3 reveal a cluster of corporate disaster assistance allocations to Myanmar in 2008. Disaster assistance is concentrated in 2008 because of Cyclone Nargis, in which the city of Yangon and the surrounding Ayerawaddy River Delta region suffered directly. Similarly, a magnitude 9.1 earthquake in Indonesia in 2004 greatly influenced the number of reported disaster assistance allocations by Keidanren 1% Club members that year. Recently, many NGO organizations report providing emergency assistance to Cambodia, but not to Indonesia or Myanmar. Thus, the unpredictable nature of natural disasters results in spurts of private development assistance that appears less consistent than social development assistance.

There are also interesting differences among the three types of association. The NGO data in table 9 includes “peace building/peace,” a category which does not appear in either the *koueki houjin* or the CSR data. NGOs focus on advocacy, human rights, and peace to an extent that other organizations do not. Moreover, NGOs focus on local needs more than the others do. NGO peace assistance is concentrated in Cambodia. A significant component of this is assistance for demining and support for people who were injured by landmines planted during the Cambodian civil war.

NGO projects show a relative balance across all three countries. In contrast, CSR has tended to concentrate in Indonesia, reflecting the Japanese business presence there. CSR focuses on environmental preservation to an extent the other two do not, even allowing for the differences in data collection. This is especially true in Indonesia. Most of the contents of CSR-sponsored environmental preservation there is tree planting and forest restoration projects. Indonesia is the one of the countries most seriously affected by deforestation because of population growth and natural resource

exploitation.

## Conclusion

This research applied the concept of private development assistance to overseas private nonprofit activity by nongovernmental and corporate organizations in Japan. The article reviewed the concept of private development assistance, then focused on the charitable activities of registered nonprofit organizations, public interest corporations, and corporations undertaking corporate social responsibility activity in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar and attempted to assess whether they have a developmental focus and impact. Two conclusions emerge from this research.

First, the authors encountered limitations in the databases used to conduct the research. The Cabinet Office NPO portal site, JANIC, and Keidanren databases do not always provide strictly comparable data across the three types of association. Differences in compilation and presentation of basic data were especially noticeable between the Keidanren 1% Club and the databases for nonprofit organizations. Attempts were made to fill gaps by obtaining information from individual organizations' homepages. However, the more specific data sources do not necessarily present information in ways comparable to other sources, nor did they always provide information sought for the project. Country-level data was especially a problem. Availability and comparability of data are therefore issues that limit the ability to assess private development assistance as a whole.

Second, the data suggest that private development assistance does have a development or humanitarian focus and therefore possibly similar impact. The data sources used here, however, do not assess impact. Further research in that direction would require micro-level project data and therefore detailed investigation of specific organizations and development projects.

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This research applies the recently-developed concept of private development assistance to overseas private nonprofit activity by nongovernmental and corporate organizations in Japan. The article reviews the concept of private development assistance, then focuses on the charitable activities of three kinds of private organization: registered nonprofit organizations, public interest corporations, and corporations undertaking corporate social responsibility activity overseas. The article then focuses on projects carried out by these three kinds of organization in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Myanmar and attempts to assess whether they have a developmental focus and impact. Conclusions and limitations of the project are discussed. In particular, the authors encountered limitations in the databases used to conduct the research. Databases do not always provide strictly comparable data across the three types of association due to differences in compilation and presentation of basic data. Country-level data was especially a problem. Availability and comparability of data limit the ability to assess private development assistance as a whole. The data suggest that private development assistance has a development or humanitarian focus; the data sources used here, however, cannot assess impact.